Hornets' Nest part five - The Hive of Horror, by Paul Magrs

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MIKE YATES: (narrating) It's a long time ago now, but I used to find myself drawn into improbable adventures almost every week as a result of my working for the same secret military organisation as a particular man. A mysterious man, who claimed to come from the furthest reaches of Space. Over three decades later, the fellow turned up again. Impossibly, it seemed. And I suppose I shouldn't really have been surprised at some of the more bizarre consequences. It all started in the third week of December, when I happened upon an intriguing advertisement in Country Time magazine. Particularly intriguing, as it seemed to be presenting me, and I presumed me alone, with a direct call to action. It was so very specific, you see. "Wanted. Retired Army Captain for light household duties and fireside companionship. Must tolerate mild eccentricity and strong scientific advice. Knowledge of giant maggots, super-intelligent spiders and prehistoric monsters a positive boon." I phoned the number, and talked with the very brusque housekeeper, known as Mrs Wibbsey, of Nest Cottage in deepest, darkest Sussex. I reported for duty the very next afternoon. Snow threatening in the clouds, I remember. The shortest day of the year was still a recent memory. And when I entered that rather nicely appointed dwelling, who do you think I should meet again? The Doctor. Large as life and just as impossible, all over again, looking just as he had done thirty years previously. Here he was again, an aggravating cross between Sherlock Holmes and the Mad Hatter. And no sooner had we sat down to dinner but he had embroiled me in yet another of his outrageous adventures. True to his very special form, we spent the whole of the following night in the cellar, barricaded against the ... creatures that pleased themselves to run amok in his home during the nocturnal hours. There the Doctor availed himself of the opportunity to fill me in on some of his recent adventures, all connected with this current ... predicament. Back in the UNIT days, the Brigadier could never get him to report fully on anything, not even what he'd taken from the stationery cupboard. But that night, as we sat there in the dark, he told me of this extraordinary pursuit he'd been on, chasing deadly alien hornets through Earth's history. Hornets, I ask you! Still, I should have known that he'd be involved in something to do with the end of civilised life on the planet as we know it. The Doctor had erected a kind of invisible bell-jar over his house, a force-shield, keeping all the deadly creatures trapped within, along with all the things and beings they have possessed. Yes, dear listener. The Doctor had trapped us inside with these terrible creatures. The Doctor's tales were strange, even for him. Stuffed animals coming to deadly life, the dancer who stole the haunted ballet shoes, the old doll's house in which he became trapped. If I hadn't known him well, I'd have sworn he was making it all up. Then there was the circus where they made him put his head in the lion's mouth, and the woodlands filled with wild dogs and besieged nuns. And all the while he had a date with his enemies here, for the final showdown. Once the Doctor's tales were over, dawn had arrived and we emerged blinking from the cellar to find Nest Cottage overrun by the possessed animals. It was a madhouse with Mrs Wibbsey presiding over it all. Soon, however, as the morning brightened, the animals fell asleep where they stood as was their wont. I didn't trust them an inch, however. Just by looking at them you knew that something very nasty was going on behind their glass eyes. It was flattering that the Doctor should think that I, his old colleague and the Brig's second-in-command, could do something to help him defeat these horrible foes. But I couldn't help wondering why. Little did either of us realise that it was for the most unimaginably horrible reason of all.

(Tom Baker's opening Doctor Who theme, composed by Ron Grainer.)

ANNOUNCER: (Tom Baker) Doctor Who. Hornets' Nest. Hive Of Horror, by Paul Magrs. Starring Tom Baker and Richard Franklin.

(Background sounds of clock ticking and coal fire burning.)
THE DOCTOR: (singing) Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the feast of freedom.

MIKE YATES: Morning, Doctor.
THE DOCTOR: Ah, Mike. Better for a little wash and brush-up, eh?
MIKE YATES: Indeed. Those creatures of yours and that Wibbsey woman can be a little fierce, I must say. I felt like I was fighting for my life just getting out of the cellar this morning.
THE DOCTOR: Yes. It's a good job the dawn had arrived. They're easier to pacify in the daytime. Tea?
MIKE YATES: Thank you. Now, what are we going to do about these hornet things? You can't go round hypnotising everything for ever.
THE DOCTOR: First things first, Mike. I have here on the table one or two pieces of equipment from the TARDIS.
MIKE YATES: You and that Police Box. I wondered why I hadn't seen it about.
THE DOCTOR: I've hidden it away from the further attentions of the hornet swarm - she's quite safe. Which is more than I can say for the entire human race, should the hornets have their way.
MIKE YATES: All right, so what's all this gubbins?
THE DOCTOR: Well, this part is the TARDIS's dimensional stabiliser.
MIKE YATES: Oh.
THE DOCTOR: Mm. It's currently generating the force-shield around the cottage. What are those ballet shoes doing here?
MIKE YATES: I used them to swat that bat last night, remember? Oh, I say. Are they...?
THE DOCTOR: Yes they are. The very ones that were controlled by the group mind of the swarm.
MIKE YATES: Mouldy old things, aren't they?
THE DOCTOR: Bringing them to the table has given me an idea. I do believe we can use them, in conjunction with all this gubbins as you call it, to tap into the special powers of the hornets.
MIKE YATES: I see. Just explain to me, what will happen if we don't defeat these insect things? I need to know what's at stake here. Soldier, you see.
THE DOCTOR: Mike, these hornets are alien creatures that can infiltrate and possess anything. Human, animal, living, dead, inanimate. They can bring anything to life.
MIKE YATES: As we've seen with these blasted stuffed animals. Not exactly world-threatening though, is it?
THE DOCTOR: No? How would you like to have your every move, your every mood dictated by insects buzzing about inside your skull, mm? They want to enslave the whole lot of us, and make this world into a nightmarish place, like the last world they wrecked and abandoned - oh yes, I've done my research. I know what it means for a world to be attacked by the deadly swarm.
MIKE YATES: So we're all that stands between Mankind and a horrible fate at the hands of insects.
THE DOCTOR: They don't have hands, Mike, but yes, you're quite right. Now, help me to carry this lot back into the parlour, would you?
MIKE YATES: Another one of your lash-ups. It doesn't look very impressive.
THE DOCTOR: It doesn't have to. The dimensional stabiliser just has be able to do what I ask it to, tuning itself into the ineffable vibrations still present in this ballet slipper. Here. Look after the other one, would you?
MIKE YATES: Ballet slippers indeed!
THE DOCTOR: Our biggest problem, of course, is that in using this lash-up, I'd be lowering the defensive shield around the cottage. The stabiliser can't do both jobs at once, you see.
MIKE YATES: Isn't that terribly dangerous?
THE DOCTOR: Potentially lethal, not just to us but to the entire planet, but I can't see any way around it. While I'm using this machine the force-shield will crumble, and everything that's kept safely indoors will be able to get out. All the stuffed animals, the bric-a-brac, the possessed furniture, even Captain the wolfhound. The hornets will be able to take over again.
MIKE YATES: And what is it this machine'll be doing?
THE DOCTOR: Just wait and see. If it works, it will be marvellous. But the clock will be ticking. We will have a mission and a very finite time in which to accomplish that mission. Otherwise all, and I mean all, is lost.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) The Doctor then had me carry all the various bits of his machine through the hallway and into the parlour of his cottage. A rather musty-smelling disused room

at the back. There, on a pristine Persian rug, stood a zebra - stuffed, and luckily, quite inanimate.

THE DOCTOR: Ah good, she's asleep. I thought we'd have to chase her around and force her down, but she's deeply under, thank goodness.
MIKE YATES: Is it particularly dangerous then, this zebra?
THE DOCTOR: Close the door behind us, quickly man.
(Door closed.)
THE DOCTOR: She's the deadliest of the lot. She's the only one I can't always pacify through hypnosis.
MIKE YATES: Beautiful beast. And why is that? You can put all the others in a trance pretty easily, can't you?
THE DOCTOR: It's keeping them there. That's the hard thing, but this zebra, I can't put her under at all. She paces around in here all night. She'd have your arm off if she could get hold of you. There's something singular about this zebra, something different to the others.
MIKE YATES: You said something about taking our struggle to the top, to the lion's den.
THE DOCTOR: Well, not the lion exactly. Zebra.
MIKE YATES: Are you saying this creature contains the leader of the hornets?
THE DOCTOR: Very good, Mike, very good indeed. Now, just let me get this machine sorted.
MIKE YATES: Good gracious. The Queen of the swarm, inside a zebra.
(Knocking on wooden door.)
THE DOCTOR: Yes.
(Door opens, MRS WIBBSEY clears her throat.)
MRS WIBBSEY: Are you and your friend in for lunch today, Doctor?
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, come in and close the door behind you.
MRS WIBBSEY: Whatever are you doing with that zebra?
THE DOCTOR: The door, Mike!
(Door closed.)
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, Mike, we are going to confront the Queen in her hive, where she is defended and protected at the very heart of the swarm. Probably she is aware of us at this very moment. As tiny as she is, she's watching us, amused by our antics.
MIKE YATES: How do we get at her?
THE DOCTOR: We're on our way. Can't you feel it?
(Wind whistling noise.)
THE DOCTOR: The dimensional stabiliser's working. Now, everybody hold onto the zebra's head, and onto each other.
MRS WIBBSEY: Ooh...
MIKE YATES: Now that you mention it, I ... do feel rather queasy.
MRS WIBBSEY: Get your hands off. I'm not coming anywhere with you. I've work to be doing.
THE DOCTOR: Oh, Mrs Wibbsey, too late.
MRS WIBBSEY: Ooh!
THE DOCTOR: We couldn't possibly risk leaving you behind. Now, hold on.
MRS WIBBSEY: What's happening? The room's getting bigger.
MIKE YATES: No. We're getting smaller. Aren't we, Doctor?
MRS WIBBSEY: Oh...
MIKE YATES: That's what you're doing. You're shrinking us down.
THE DOCTOR: To the size of a match-head. You're right, Mike. We're going to face the hornets on their own level, inside their very own nest. We are going into the hive itself.
(MRS WIBBSEY fearful gasp. THE DOCTOR laughs.)
MRS WIBBSEY: The ground's falling away from my feet!
THE DOCTOR: Pull yourself together, Wibbsey.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) This is where things started going really peculiar - at least as far as I was concerned. The Doctor had been battling the hornets for some weeks, and he'd been through some pretty rum dos. All I had done was listen to his stories. Now, at last, I felt that I was getting properly involved.

(Shrinking noise subsides.)
MRS WIBBSEY: What are you doing to us, you foolish man?
THE DOCTOR: Remember, Mrs Wibbsey, how you were instrumental in shrinking Ernestina

and me and popping us into that antique doll's house?
MRS WIBBSEY: You can't blame me for that. I wasn't in my right mind.
THE DOCTOR: It's very fascinating - being shrunk, I mean. Think of it as a learning experience.
MIKE YATES: Have we stopped?
(Shrinking noise stops.)
MRS WIBBSEY: I hope so. We couldn't get much smaller.
THE DOCTOR: Oh, we could keep on shrinking forever. We could be right down in the microverse if we're not careful. There are galaxies within galaxies, you know.
MIKE YATES: Doctor, don't alarm the poor woman.
MRS WIBBSEY: I've heard worse from him.
THE DOCTOR: Anyway, I've gauged everything correctly. I think we've stopped.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) We were standing on a kind of steep hillside covered in long, coarse grass. For a moment or two it was perplexing ... until the Doctor pointed out that the vegetation was black and white.

THE DOCTOR: This isn't long grass. It's fur.
MIKE YATES: The zebra?
THE DOCTOR: Would a zebra describe it as fur, do you think? Or pelt. Certainly not hair. Anyway, we appear to be on the zebra's head.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) It was one of the most curious expeditions I have ever been involved with. We had to clamber our way down to the ear, tethered together by the Doctor's scarf. Suddenly I could see the sense of his wearing such a ludicrous item of apparel. Mrs Wibbsey was complaining all the way, and I pointed out that I hadn't expected a civilian to be tagging along with us.

MRS WIBBSEY: Civilian? Typical soldier's talk. Look at you, like two little boys going off on an adventure.
MIKE YATES: Hardly boys, Mrs Wibbsey.
MRS WIBBSEY: You should know better at your ages.
THE DOCTOR: Here we are, outside the gateway to the brain.
MRS WIBBSEY: How can it have a brain? It's stuffed.
THE DOCTOR: Not a brain like you or I understand it. It's a hornets' nest in there, the central headquarters of our enemies.
MRS WIBBSEY: Oh, I see. And you're going in there, are you?

MIKE YATES: (narrating) I studied her reaction for a moment or two. I was highly suspicious when it came to Mrs Wibbsey. The Doctor had told me of her strange carryings-on, back in her own time in the Palace of Curios. She had already been taken over by the hornets. Perhaps she was still susceptible to their control. It's something I know quite a lot about. Perhaps Mrs Wibbsey was here to keep an eye on us. I listened hard, but I couldn't detect that curious buzzing noise the Doctor said could be heard around the persons of the possessed. Perhaps that was because I had become deaf to the humming of the insects. We were so small, no bigger than the head of a pin, and the hornet noise was all about us.

THE DOCTOR: Well, Mrs Wibbsey? Are you coming with us?
MRS WIBBSEY: That ear-hole looks awfully dark.
THE DOCTOR: Luckily, I've brought my torch. Come on.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) The ground underfoot was curiously hollow. Each footstep made a thumping noise as we clattered our way into the ear. The preserved skin of the beast felt a bit like hairy cardboard, and it was rank with layers of dust. After a good deal of awkward clambering and panting and sneezing, we were inside the dark cavity that led straight into the stuffed beast's head.

(Gentle whistling of wind in background.)
THE DOCTOR: We haven't time to rest for long. This place will be on the alert. They'll know we're here pretty soon.

MIKE YATES: Just give me a moment.
THE DOCTOR: All right, Mike.
MRS WIBBSEY: Look at him. He can hardly breathe. What are you thinking of, Doctor, bringing him into this? What can he do?
MIKE YATES: I'm just a little out of training, that's all.
MRS WIBBSEY: These hornets are ruthless, deadly. What on Earth do you hope to do about them?
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, enough.
MRS WIBBSEY: What? I just don't see what's so special about him. He's a has-been.
THE DOCTOR: Sometimes you forget yourself, Mrs Wibbsey.
MRS WIBBSEY: On the contrary, I remember everything.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) And with that, the aggravating housekeeper turned to lead us into the darkness and up inside the inner ear.

MIKE YATES: Better keep an eye on her, Doctor.
THE DOCTOR: Quite. Did I ever tell you, Mike, about the time I was shrunk and injected into my own head? Phoar! This trip is a doddle compared to that one.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) And so we walked through constricted tunnels on the toughened corrugations of dried canals. The Doctor's torch beam played ahead of us, illuminating dead blood vessels that looked like graffiti on the walls. The reek of formaldehyde was heavy on the air, almost drugging us as we trudged into the weird darkness.
(Multiple insects buzzing.)
MIKE YATES: (narrating) And now we could hear it - the song of the hornets. We were approaching their nest.

THE DOCTOR: I must say, I find it most odd they haven't sent anyone to attack us.
MIKE YATES: We should have brought more weapons.
MRS WIBBSEY: Perhaps they want us to get inside. Perhaps we are unimpeded for a reason.
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, I believe you may be right.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) Soon the ground underfoot was different, paler, soft like vellum. The Doctor crouched in the darkness, tapping and touching this new surface.

THE DOCTOR: It's paper. We're very near.
MRS WIBBSEY: Paper? The mind is made out of paper?
THE DOCTOR: Of course. The hornets chew it into a pulp, then they form these fantastic cities of whirled tunnels and luminous chambers and cells. They are engineering masterpieces, cities of papier-m.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) I brought up the rear as we advanced into the city's brain, or rather the brain city. It grew lighter, almost imperceptibly, and we let go of the Doctor's scarf. He looped it back around his neck and sniffed the air like a dog, catching his bearings from the breeze. As the paper tunnels twisted and veered, we lost all sense of direction. Pale golden light threw soft shadows everywhere, and we plodded cautiously in their smudginess, deeper into the paper labyrinth. Mrs Wibbsey saw my hip flask, and scowled.

THE DOCTOR: I thought you didn't drink these days, Mike.
MIKE YATES: I don't. Lethbridge-Stewart gave me this the day I left the service. It's still got some of his whisky in it. Sentimental of me to carry it, but I do. I just suddenly had an idea about it.
MRS WIBBSEY: Never mind that now. Evil stuff. Put it away.
THE DOCTOR: We mustn't get distracted, Mike.
MRS WIBBSEY: We're lost, aren't we?
THE DOCTOR: All paths will tend towards the heart and the Queen in the centre of her hive. We'll get there.
MIKE YATES: What I don't understand is, why haven't we seen any of the hornet creatures? For a central headquarters, this place isn't very busy.
THE DOCTOR: They've all been out in the fields as it were, Mike, running amok through the

countryside in their possessed body vehicles, gathering food for the Queen, from the base mental energy I told you about earlier. All those encounters I told you about through history, they were with warrior hornets, the soldiers, the drones, all serving the Queen. I have a feeling though, now that we're in here, they may soon be making a return to the nest.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) Little did we know that even as we spoke, the hornets were emerging from their hiding-places in Nest Cottage. Out they came from the stuffed creatures, scuttling from inside the furniture and out of the woodwork. The air must have been thick and black with their teeming bodies as they made their way to the zebra host.

THE DOCTOR: Shh! Can you hear them?
MRS WIBBSEY: I think so.
MIKE YATES: I can't. It's too quiet if you ask me.
THE DOCTOR: They're playing with us, taunting us.
MIKE YATES: But they're only insects. Why should we submit to their mind games? We should be able to just ... smoke them out. Had bees in my chimney breast once, you know. That's how you get shot of them, with smoke, pure and simple.
MRS WIBBSEY: Hornets are very subtle, Mr Yates. They stole inside my mind all those years ago. I couldn't think straight. They turned my whole world upside-down. Their song distorts everything.
MIKE YATES: Fortunately I've spent many years learning to withstand brainwashing techniques, training myself, honing my defences. Following my ... breakdown, I studied with a number of Yogis and mystics. Nothing can interfere with *my* mind.
MRS WIBBSEY: You wouldn't be able to resist them any more than I could.
THE DOCTOR: Come on. The vibrations in the walls are becoming deeper, more profound. We are near the centre.
MRS WIBBSEY: Doctor, what are you going to do once you're face-to-face with this Queen in her hive? Bamboozle her? Charm her with that wit and debonair style you keep telling me about?
THE DOCTOR: That would be a start, wouldn't it?
MRS WIBBSEY: You don't appreciate their power, their might.
MIKE YATES: Rot. No good will come of defeatist talk, Mrs Wibbsey.
MRS WIBBSEY: With respect, Mr Yates, you're no longer anyone's knight in shining armour, are you? And this one's brains are addled the way he's talking. He's been affected by his battles with these creatures. All I'm saying is that we don't stand a chance.
MIKE YATES: I've a good mind to send you back the way you came.
MRS WIBBSEY: Where? Nineteen Thirty-Two, mm? I can't go back there, can I? I've been taken out of my time. My life is ruined. I'm in the future, way after whenever my natural death would have been. What have I got left?
THE DOCTOR: Not even the Palace of Curios. I'm sorry, Mrs Wibbsey, but taking you away from there, it was the only way. Everything infected and infested. I had to get it back to my cottage.
MRS WIBBSEY: I'm just the same as that dead gargoyle man in the garden, or your dog. I'm just another infested thing.
THE DOCTOR: 'Fraid so, Wibbsey.
MIKE YATES: She's still under their control.
MRS WIBBSEY: What?
MIKE YATES: It's just hit me, the way she's talking, jeering at us, bringing down our morale. It's the hornets, talking through her.
MRS WIBBSEY: The man's mad.
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, are you sure? Are you under their power again?
MRS WIBBSEY: No. I'd be the first to know, wouldn't I?
THE DOCTOR: Not necessarily.
MIKE YATES: It's her. She's the Queen of the hive.
THE DOCTOR: What?
MIKE YATES: I could tell she was up to something. She's been laughing at us the whole time.
MRS WIBBSEY: What are you doing? Get your hands off me!
THE DOCTOR: Mike, what are you doing?
MIKE YATES: I'm arresting her.
THE DOCTOR: With your necktie?

MIKE YATES: It'll keep her out of mischief while we're in here, to have her hands tied.
MRS WIBBSEY: Now I can't even defend myself if we're attacked.
MIKE YATES: You're the hornet Queen. They won't attack you.
MRS WIBBSEY: You're talking rubbish. I'm just a woman. Just a stupid old woman who believed the Doctor when he promised her she'd come to no more harm if she followed him. Well, that was wrong for a start.
THE DOCTOR: You haven't been repossessed, have you, Mrs Wibbsey?
MRS WIBBSEY: Of course not.
THE DOCTOR: It must be hard to tell, when everything is so distorted. It would be very disappointing to learn that you have been the hornet Queen all this time. I would feel very let down.
MIKE YATES: It seems there are some people who simply can't be rehabilitated.
THE DOCTOR: I hope you're not becoming callous and flippant in your maturer years, Mike.
MIKE YATES: Nonsense, Doctor. Now, come on. We'd best get moving again. I feel better now that we've got this one under some measure of control.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) I was being such an idiot. I don't know what had come over me. It really wasn't like me to be ... yes, as the Doctor said, callous and flippant. But I had slipped into some awful mood. Something was niggling at me, and making me behave like this. We turned the next corner, and there they were waiting for us. A small party of hornet drones, hovering malevolently and blocking the whole tunnel ahead of us. Even in my mood of dark bravado they came as a shock. Each was as large as a bicycle and they pedalled in mid air, gazing down on us with glittering black eyes. Their wings were a jewel-like blur, their stings were arched forward, sheeny tips, curdled with venom. They had come to collect us. That much was clear.

(Buzzing of many insects.)
THE DOCTOR: How very nice to see you at last. We were thinking that perhaps we'd come to the party too late, that this was an empty hive. Is the Queen in residence then today? I saw no flags.
MIKE YATES: Not very communicative, are they?
MRS WIBBSEY: They're turning. We have to follow them.
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, keep out of range of their stings.
MRS WIBBSEY: Why should I care? We're dead now anyway, aren't we? Look, untie me, will you?

MIKE YATES: (narrating) As we were led into the depths of their hive, it was clear that the whole place was filling up again. The insects had come crawling out of the cottage wainscotting, and they were coming home to welcome us. We were being drawn into the deadliest of traps. The Doctor told me later that at this point he began to notice something very strange about me. According to him, my behaviour since we had entered the hive had become more and more erratic. For instance, tying up Mrs Wibbsey, which the Doctor said was typical of some new snappish paranoid demeanour I had taken on. He had seen me like this before, in my dark days, when I turned traitor against my friends, before my breakdown. As we entered into the throne room of the Queen of the hive, he could see that my hand was ready to go for my automatic pistol. Not that it would have done me any good in there. The insects would have been upon me before I could cause much damage. But the Doctor could see I was as itchy and as jumpy as the hornets were, and that wasn't good news for any of us. He recounted to me later how the rest of that final encounter in the skull had unfurled.

THE DOCTOR: The Queen was prying into our thoughts, Mike. I could sense her exquisite feelers tickling at the edges of my consciousness. She was tasting my mind, and rubbing her coarsely-haired legs against her mandibles with greedy avarice. She was outraged at one level that creatures of this world had the temerity to seek audience with her in her own home. But at another level, she was delighted - this was new, this was sensational, nothing like this had ever happened before. The Queen waited, drooling on her throne. We were marched into her golden state room, and marvelled at the architecture. Do you remember, Mike? Stuck with insect spit, moulded lovingly by a million twitchy legs. The throne room was a miracle, furnished in sputum, venom and pulp. Yes, sputum, venom and pulp. I got my bearings, and surveyed the scene. And there she was. A more delectable specimen of vespida I have never

seen. Her vast bald head nodded and swayed as she stared back at us. Her livery was buttercup yellow and brilliant black. She buzzed and quivered with massive intelligence, and we could feel the telepathic waves emanating from her. Hot, like a hairdryer on full blast. We could feel the musings and mitherings of millions upon millions of her workers and drones feeding back to her.

(*This is where part one ended on the radio*.)

MRS WIBBSEY: It's her. It's really her!
MIKE YATES: This creature is what has caused mayhem down all these years? It's horrible.
THE DOCTOR: Horrible? I don't think so, Mike. I think she's rather beautiful, so tremulously alert.
MIKE YATES: Don't get too close.
THE DOCTOR: I don't think she'll lash out and kill me now. Not after all this time, mm? We've known each other a very long time, haven't we, dear? How long is it since you came to Earth, twelve hundred years? And I've known you almost as long, one way or another. And you know me well, too, don't you, even if we've been advancing towards each other from opposite ends of time.
MRS WIBBSEY: Stop chuntering. Do something. Kill her!
MIKE YATES: Oh, do be quiet, woman. The Doctor knows what he's doing. And watch you don't disturb the drones. Step out of line and they'll have you.
THE DOCTOR: We've been doing the two-step across the centuries, haven't we, your Majesty, bowing and whirling about each other. I've been dancing the gentleman's excuse me, tapping the shoulders of each human being you have possessed, freeing them, and chasing after your next victim, and I've been defeating you, haven't I, eh? Each time finding out where you're skulking, what shady corners your swarm is hiding in, what ancient pieces of bric-a-brac you're making your home. Ha, ha. Hardly an impressive invasion, is it. Hardly an invasion at all.
MIKE YATES: I've seen him do this before. He's goading her.
MRS WIBBSEY: So you still think he knows what he's doing, Mr Yates? He's a madman!
MIKE YATES: He gets quite close to the edge sometimes, but don't we all, in facing the things we fear?
THE DOCTOR: Come on, what have you got to say for yourself, eh? All this time, twelve hundred years, it's a very long time to have somebody's acquaintance and never really meet them face to face. Aren't you terribly curious to see how I'm getting on, hmm?
THE QUEEN: Where are our manners. Of course. We do apologise, Doctor. You must forgive us.
THE DOCTOR: That's more like it, your Majesty. I thought you were sulking.
THE QUEEN: You must understand, our attention is on so many things at once. Such a huge empire. So many minds linked to ours. It can be quite hard.
THE DOCTOR: What, to focus on what's right underneath your very probosis? Yes, I can see that. Well, it's us. Here we are. We've come straight to your heart of operations this time. I was sick of dashing about the place taking care of the damage you caused. I've come straight to the lady at the top.
THE QUEEN: (chuckles) How very kind.

(*This is where part two started on the radio*.)

THE QUEEN: We are most gratified and pleased to see you in the puny ephemeral flesh, Doctor.
THE DOCTOR: Eh? Puny and ephemeral it may be, but it's also very determined. That goes for all three of us. My housekeeper, Mrs Wibbsey, whom you already met and possessed of course, and the former Captain Mike Yates over there. You should know him - he's a devil when his dander's up, aren't ya, Mike?
MRS WIBBSEY: Doctor, something's wrong with Mr Yates.
THE DOCTOR: Mike?
THE QUEEN: Come here, little man. Come and kneel before your Queen.
MIKE YATES: Your Majesty.
THE QUEEN: Queen and Country. Aren't you supposed to serve your Queen and Country?
THE DOCTOR: Not hornet Queen and Country, that's not it. Mike, come back.
THE QUEEN: Did your Queen ever knight you, Captain Yates? Did she ever reward you

properly for your years of steadfast service? For facing the foes you did, for saving the world again and again.
MIKE YATES: No, as a matter of fact, she didn't.
MRS WIBBSEY: He's getting very close to her, Doctor.
THE DOCTOR: Mike, come back. You don't care about medals and titles and all that rubbish.
THE QUEEN: You didn't even get an honourable discharge. Why, you were only trying to make the world a better place, weren't you? A new, more enlightened regime. And yet they cast you out. They forgot about you, didn't they, Captain Yates. We will reward you. We will make you our knight. Come here, little man.
THE DOCTOR: Mike, be careful.
MIKE YATES: I know what I'm doing.

THE DOCTOR: And there you were, Mike, having advanced on bended knee before the Queen. She was basking in your supplication, preeningly glad of your cringing before her mandibles. But then, at the very last moment, you whipped out your service revolver.

THE QUEEN: And what is this supposed to be? Some kind of attempt on our life?
MIKE YATES: I can put a whole clip of bullets through your brain before your next breath. Where would the hornets be then, eh?
THE QUEEN: Interesting. I thought we had succeeded in controlling you.
MIKE YATES: I've resisted stronger forces than you.
THE DOCTOR: Well done, Mike, but, er, I wouldn't kill her though, not just yet.
MIKE YATES: If I do, that's an end to it. The Queen rules all, doesn't she? Without her, the rest are just a harmless bunch of insects, aren't they.
THE DOCTOR: To an extent, they are, but we'd never get out of here alive if you assassinated her now.
MRS WIBBSEY: The fool's going to get us killed, isn't he?
THE DOCTOR: There are better ways of going about this, Mike. You don't need to go waving guns around. This is an intelligent species.
MRS WIBBSEY: Stupid soldier games he's playing. You think he'll listen to you?
MIKE YATES: Point blank range.
MRS WIBBSEY: Half an hour ago, that's what he was going to do to me. The man's a menace.
THE QUEEN: No one is going to die. You are all precious to us. You are all here because we have called you here. You each have a role.
MIKE YATES: Stop talking, all of you.
THE DOCTOR: Mike, back away from her.
MIKE YATES: No, Doctor.
THE DOCTOR: If you harm him ...
THE QUEEN: Who is the most threatened? Are we in a position to hurt him? We think not.
THE DOCTOR: You're reaching into his mind.
MIKE YATES: I must kill you. Queen and Country.
THE QUEEN: Such a loyal little man. No wonder you think so much of him, Doctor. Your friendship has gone on for years, rather like ours.
THE DOCTOR: Wait a minute. How do we even know you're a Queen? I've never met you before. I've felt your presence, yes, in each and every time I've met your kind.
THE QUEEN: What are you talking about.
MIKE YATES: Of course she's a Queen.
THE DOCTOR: But I've only ever fought your minions, your workers, your drones. They've been doing all the dirty work, such as possessing poor old Mrs Wibbsey here, or running that dreadful circus of doom. But you, you've kept yourself hidden away, haven't you. I glimpsed you once, dancing in a pig's eye, the precious one, the fragile Queen. Where was your nest then, in all those previous encounters, eh? Where was the hive?
THE QUEEN: The hive is always hidden. Workers and drones protect it. You have never met us before in the flesh because there was no need. But we have felt each other's influence, haven't we, Doctor? We have both known the other was there.
THE DOCTOR: Sort of. But if my friend is going to shoot someone, I'd rather know for certain that he was wasting all of his bullets on the *actual* Queen, you see.
THE QUEEN: Of course we are the Queen!
MIKE YATES: Shall I kill her? Would it be over if I did?
THE DOCTOR: Almost as over as you can get, Mike. No, leave her alone. I want to reason

with the woman.
MRS WIBBSEY: I've had them in my mind. They're ruthless, alien, heartless. You can't talk to them as if they're people.
THE DOCTOR: I hope I talk to everyone as if they're people, Mrs Wibbsey, alien or not.
THE QUEEN: You are also so interesting. But we're weary now. We need to replenish our strength.

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) She motioned once, jerkily, with a single arm, and the throne room was filled at once with workers. They danced attendance on her effortlessly, and we saw hoe futile any gesture of rebellion on our part was. You could never have attacked her, Mike. The way those creatures moved, some would have interposed themselves to take the bullets. The Queen was never in danger. She was toying with us, learning about us. You looked very dejected as you sat there at her feet, the air about you whirring with hornet activity. The workers were bringing their Queen great fleshy pillows, containing some gloopy substance. She was taking each sac, puncturing it, and drinking the golden ichor down greedily. It was evidently tea time for the Queen. What was she eating if it wasn't bread and honey? I racked my brains. Wasn't it something that the pupating young in their cells manufactured, some kind of life-sustaining jelly that they secreted and gave soley to the Queen in her hive? I watched with fascination.

THE DOCTOR: Even in deadliest danger there's something to be learned, Mrs Wibbsey. Just look at that.
MRS WIBBSEY: You men make me sick. Can't you see we're going to die?
THE DOCTOR: And you, Mrs Wibbsey, are teetering at the edge of being an impossible companion. Remember? Negative thoughts are what they love. They feed on them psychically. They *want* us to think nasty things. Did you see the Queen writhe as Mike held his gun at her and thought murderous things about her? It's all bread and butter to her. Bread and butter for her golden jelly.
MRS WIBBSEY: What are they doing?
THE DOCTOR: Leading us away. The Queen evidently wants some privacy. Well, we can't deny a lady her afternoon nap.
MRS WIBBSEY: But Captain Yates?
THE DOCTOR: Shh. She's separating us. That doesn't bode well, does it? Be strong, Mike. Don't give in.
MIKE YATES: Doctor? What? Where are you going?

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) We had no choice, Mike, but to leave you there. The hornets descended, stings brandished cruelly at our backs. We were taken out of the throne room and through a complex network of luminous corridors. Then we were bundled into a waxy cell. The walls were almost transparent. Through them, we could see the vague shifting bodies of the hornets going about their business.

MRS WIBBSEY: We're sealed in. Do they eat humans?
THE DOCTOR: No, of course not.
MRS WIBBSEY: You don't know everything.
THE DOCTOR: Very true.
MRS WIBBSEY: Well, what do they want us for?
THE DOCTOR: We've been taken over before - well, you have. They couldn't properly get to me, too well-balanced and sweet-natured as I am.
MRS WIBBSEY: What?
THE DOCTOR: It may be easier for them to control damaged souls, people who rage inside their hearts. Those who think dark thoughts of jealousy and pain. Those people are susceptible. You know that, Mrs Wibbsey. That's what allows the hornets to peep inside your mind. They want to control people like that and pilot them, use them. Take over the world with them.
MRS WIBBSEY: Take over the world?
THE DOCTOR: Yes. How does that make you feel, Mrs Wibbsey? Promotion at last, eh?
MRS WIBBSEY: It sounds better than running around after an intergalactic dilettante and cleaning up his messes.
THE DOCTOR: Oh - does it really? I am appalled by that.

MRS WIBBSEY: Oh ... I shouldn't lash out at you. You've been very good to me. Especially after I almost had you killed that time.
THE DOCTOR: It's the hornets. They've had us all acting counter to our natures.
MRS WIBBSEY: Is it true, what you said? That they're drawn to damaged, embittered hearts, that they feed off negative human emotions?
THE DOCTOR: Oh yes. The psychic vibrations are so much more delectable, it seems, from a person in distress. Luckily, I'm quite a cheery soul deep down. That's why no matter what they tried, they could never subsume my personality ultimately. I'm quite well-balanced, you'll be startled to hear.
MRS WIBBSEY: As I'm a bitter old woman.
THE DOCTOR: Ye - oh, now, now.
MRS WIBBSEY: No, it's true. Even back in Cromer, when my tiny life revolved around the Palace of Curios, I couldn't be content even then, even when I wasn't in constant deadly danger.
THE DOCTOR: Perhaps you need new challenges.
MRS WIBBSEY: Adventures, you mean? I'm not sure I hold with adventures if that's what we're having now.
THE DOCTOR: It's not always like this, you know. Sometimes the things I get involved in can be absolutely hair-raising. But it's Mike I'm worried about.
MRS WIBBSEY: She's turning him against us.
THE DOCTOR: Yes. But I believe he's strong.
MRS WIBBSEY: What about the darkness in his soul, Doctor? Are you sure he isn't easy prey for them like I was? You don't really know what's inside him, do you, what resentments he harbours, what dreadful thoughts?
THE DOCTOR: He won't betray me. I've known him since he was a young man. He's had a few wobbles, a few unfortunate allegiances, but I trust him nevertheless.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) But just at that very moment, I was in consultation with the jubilant Queen of the hive. She was murmuring sweet dark nothings into these old soldier's ears of mine. I'll admit I was confused, but trying to remain implacable in the face of her blandishments. She buzzed away in my ears. What she said went beyond words. It was a deep, deadly buzzing through the fibres of my mind. A low, hypnotic beat that rang through my consciousness. The vibrations entered into me, and stirred the murky resentments at the bottom of my soul.

THE QUEEN: You don't know anything about this man from Space. You never did. And yet he has had more impact on your life and career than almost anyone.
MIKE YATES: I trust the Doctor.
THE QUEEN: But he has made a fool of you, all these years. He turns up, and does as he pleases. He takes all the credit. He deplores your contributions and methods. He secretly laughs at your pathetic limitations, your susceptibilities. Artificial intelligence is taking over your every waking thought. All those evil people at Operation Golden Age and their wicked blandishments. The Doctor despairs of you, and your idiocy.
MIKE YATES: No! You're lying. He's been a good friend.
THE QUEEN: You don't even know who he is. You humans can't rely on him. One day he will stop turning up. You'll be left to face the dangers alone, and he won't care.
MIKE YATES: He ... he has other obligations. Cosmic ones.
THE QUEEN: Are you sure? Are you sure he really travels in Space, like he says he does, in that ridiculous box of his? What proof do you have? Here you find him living in just an ordinary house. But what if it were all lies, Mike? What if he had taken you in?
MIKE YATES: I'm not listening to this.
THE QUEEN: You're old now. Look at him. Young again. He'll be young for ever. He can renew himself whenever he likes. He will turn up in a new body ever younger just when you thought you have seen the back of him. Isn't that just rubbing your face in it? His freedom from the ravages of Time, compared with your inevitable decrepitude?
MIKE YATES: It might have escaped your notice, but ... he's a Time Lord. I - I'm just a soldier. Just a human being.
THE QUEEN: But ... what if someone were in a position to offer you possession of the Doctor's body? You could have his mind, his powers, his endlessly renewable form. What then, Captain Yates?

MIKE YATES: You can't do that. Can you?
THE QUEEN: (laughs) We can get inside people's minds. We can twist them, turn them, swap them about. Your minds are just little vessels to us, like molten glass.
MIKE YATES: Even the Doctor's?
THE QUEEN: He thinks he is impervious to us. But when we were in his TARDIS, when we were playing inside his mind ... Oh, then he was so scared. He saw that he isn't so immune to us. The mind of the hive can go anywhere, do anything. Yes, Mike, we can take you into his mind. We can gift it to you, if you do things for us.
MIKE YATES: Things?
THE QUEEN: The little matter of your world. You have through your past knowledge and connections access to the minds in control of this world. The key figures who hold the real power. You can use the high rank of those people you still know in the military to help us infiltrate. You can take us straight to them, and then we can really spread our wings and swarm in earnest.
MIKE YATES: That's all you want, is it? A chance to take over the world?
THE QUEEN: And improve it. You feel better, don't you, for accepting our influence inside your mind? You are invigorated, aren't you?
MIKE YATES: It's true. I am. I really am. Just like before. So you are offering me a chance to...
THE QUEEN: To become the Doctor. To revel in his freedom from obligation, to do exactly what you want for as long as you want. We are giving you forever, should you want it.
MIKE YATES: Preposterous.
THE QUEEN: (laugh) But very, very true.

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) If I could have overheard any of that at the time, Mike, I would have been even more worried. It must have sounded rather as if you had given in to her cajoling. And who could blame you? Who *wouldn't* want to be me? Still in all, it's a pretty dirty trick setting friend against friend. Meanwhile, back in our cell...

MRS WIBBSEY: I wish I was religious. I could be praying now. But I never really felt the need. Never saw what they saw in it, if you see what I mean. My mother was at church three times on a Sunday, but she liked the singing and trips out.
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, snap out of it. We need to break out of here at once.
MRS WIBBSEY: What? Why? What's the point?
THE DOCTOR: Because at last, I've had an idea. I've put two and two together, and I've come up with this.
MRS WIBBSEY: What is it?
THE DOCTOR: A ballet slipper.
MRS WIBBSEY: Looks more like a bag of aniseed balls to me.
THE DOCTOR: You're right. I could have sworn I had Ernestina's ballet slipper in my pocket.
MRS WIBBSEY: Oh, those blessed slippers.
THE DOCTOR: Ah! I gave it to Mike for safe keeping. I knew it would come in handy. We have to get it from him, right now.
MRS WIBBSEY: What are you going to do with a manky old...
THE DOCTOR: No time for questions. Look at the walls of this cell. What are they made of?
MRS WIBBSEY: No time for questions, he says. These walls, what are they...? God knows.
THE DOCTOR: Papier-m[illegible]ch[illegible], which burns. What's this?
MRS WIBBSEY: It's a box of safety matches.
THE DOCTOR: Exactly.

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) You see, Mike, I just wanted to burn enough to get us out of our cell, and to put the wind up the hornets. I was resorting to desperate measures, I know. Setting light to things in the brain was an insanely dangerous means to an end. The black smoke was impressive, gushing in billows down the narrow capillaries of the hornet city. The insects panicked and backed away, leaving the way relatively clear for Mrs Wibbsey and myself to clamber out of the cell and to find ourselves at large in the nest.

MRS WIBBSEY: Oh, what on earth are you going to do with a ballet slipper, provided you can even get to it?
THE DOCTOR: It's still live.
MRS WIBBSEY: Alive?

THE DOCTOR: No, live, live, from its contact with the hive mind. You used it yourself when you were under their control. I foolishly thought it was free of the insects once I left Cromer, but I was wrong. They still possess both Ernestina and her stolen slippers.
MRS WIBBSEY: How did you ever think you could defeat them? It's like fighting the swarm with a butterfly net. They'll always elude you and do further damage.
THE DOCTOR: I think I know of a way to use the slipper. It's very chancy, but it just might work, if I line up my ducks correctly.
MRS WIBBSEY: Your ducks?
THE DOCTOR: It's a figure of speech, Mrs Wibbsey.
MRS WIBBSEY: I never know with you. If a whole line of ducks came walking in now, I don't think I'd bat an eyelid.
THE DOCTOR: Oh, do you know, I think I'm rather flattered by that. Mrs Wibbsey, I believe that was almost a compliment.
(Buzzing of insects.)
MRS WIBBSEY: Doctor! Watch out.

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) The attacking hornets weren't impressed by the burning torch I brandished their way, but they were absurdly fearful of the acrid churning smoke. Our luck was holding out. Of all the branching tunnels, we opted for the best-guarded ones, knowing that they would lead back to the centre of the nest.

MRS WIBBSEY: She just wanted us out of the way so she could concentrate on Captain Yates.
THE DOCTOR: I'm a bit put out by that. Here was I assuming that all of this was to do with me, but she was after Mike the whole time. She must have maneuvered me into inviting him. I must have placed that advertisement under the hornets' guidance.
MRS WIBBSEY: I suppose he'll have a lot of connections, that one. Handy when it comes to taking over the world.
THE DOCTOR: Oh, indeed. I'm not too shabby in that department myself, you know, but I'm no name-dropper of course.
(Buzzing of insects.)
MRS WIBBSEY: Here, look out. Here they come again.
MIKE YATES: Doctor? Doctor? I'm here.
THE DOCTOR: Mike?
MRS WIBBSEY: Just be careful. He's got a funny look about him.
THE DOCTOR: He won't have given in to her, Mrs Wibbsey. I know my Mike.
MIKE YATES: Stop fighting them, Doctor. Put out that flame.
THE DOCTOR: Not just yet, Mike.
MIKE YATES: You'll never believe what she offered me.
THE DOCTOR: Try me.
MIKE YATES: If I betrayed my world, the whole world, that's all she wanted. She was pretty forward with her demands.
THE DOCTOR: What did she offer you, Captain Yates?
MIKE YATES: You, Doctor. She said she could make me become you.
THE DOCTOR: What?
MRS WIBBSEY: See? The man's completely doolally.
THE DOCTOR: Shh, shh. Listen Mike, you must realise that whatever she says, it's impossible. It's madness.
MIKE YATES: They seem to do a pretty good job of tampering with minds. Even Time Lord minds.

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) Your attitude at that moment, Mike, your whole demeanour, I found very perplexing. You sounded so reasonable, so unthreatening. But beneath your calm words I detected a steely will, a will not your own. I felt in that instant as thought the mind of my old friend had shattered under the strain of his recent exertions. The Queen was inhabiting you as easily as she had done those empty china dolls, and she had sent you to execute me just as she had sent those addle-pated monsters.

MRS WIBBSEY: He's coming closer.
MIKE YATES: I should just shoot you, Mrs Wibbsey, and have done with it. What use are you?

THE DOCTOR: Now I know it isn't really you talking, Mike.
MIKE YATES: All those years I watched you come and go, Doctor, doing just as you pleased. Waltzing in, just when you liked. Saying and doing just the right most brilliant thing at precisely the correct moment. Saving the day again and again, and again.
THE DOCTOR: But that's what I do. I can't help it.
MIKE YATES: And what was I? I had no amazing flashes of inspiration. I had no extraordinary or arcane knowledge or amazing powers. I had nothing. I was just plodding along after you and the Brigadier. Shooting at things occasionally, blowing them up. I was the butt of your jokes, the some time cause of your outrage.
THE DOCTOR: More than that, you were loyal. You overcame such odds.
MIKE YATES: I could be so much more. There's so much more in here. But I'm too old for that now. There's no chance any more for me to become anything else.
THE DOCTOR: Well, that comes to you all.
MIKE YATES: Not to you. You get old and then ... shazam! A brand new you, just as aggravating as the last one. Sooner or later you're going to get younger. For all I know you're going to live a whole new life again, and again. You live, Doctor, again, and again.
THE DOCTOR: (sigh.) Give me the ballet slipper.
MIKE YATES: What?
THE DOCTOR: It's in your pocket. Give it to me right now.
MIKE YATES: But ... I'm talking to you. Telling you.
THE DOCTOR: You're ranting hysterically, like every other megalomaniac or hypnotised lackey I have ever fought, in my extremely long, fortunate and rather hectic life, and I don't have time for it. I don't need to hear about your secret resentments and loathings, Mike. I've no interest. What I'm bothered about is putting pay to the schemes of the hornets and going home again. So, do you mind obliging?
MRS WIBBSEY: You could at least listen to the man.
THE DOCTOR: Why? His mind has been utterly taken over. He's talking nonsense. Give me the slipper.
MIKE YATES: The Queen has offered me eternal life, Doctor. She has offered me the chance to be you.
THE DOCTOR: And that's not all it's cracked up to be now. Thanks for this. I want you to snap out of it at once, Captain Yates. All of this maudlin business really isn't like you.

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) I was thinking on my feet, Mike, I hope you realise that now, improvising madly as usual. Mrs Wibbsey says at that point I bore down on you with a look that would have hypnotised a bull elephant. I blocked your thoughts from the Queen for as long as I could and then, you blinked at me, suddenly released into your own mind again.

MIKE YATES: What's been happening?

MIKE YATES: (narrating) The clever Doctor then used my recently-acquired knowledge of the hive to locate the source of that delicious-looking jelly that the Queen seemed so fond of.

MRS WIBBSEY: You want to take some home with us?
THE DOCTOR: Come on, while the hornets are still fighting the fire.
MIKE YATES: Fire? But the whole place will go up in a flash.
THE DOCTOR: The hornets don't know how to stop it yet. They just keep on fanning it with their wings. They'll find a way, though. They won't let the hive be destroyed.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) So we set off under my sketchy directions. While my mind had been swamped by the Queen's, I had gained a working knowledge of the topography of the nest. So I suddenly knew that the incubation chambers where the pupating young manufactured her Majesty's favourite grog lay directly above her throne room. We clambered and hauled ourselves up tunnels and tubes not made to accommodate humanoid life-forms. Mrs Wibbsey and I made less than nimble companions as we shimmied and slithered our way into the pupating chamber. And at last, we were in a room filled with quivering grub-like bodies lying in waxy trays.

MIKE YATES: What are you planning to do, Doctor?
THE DOCTOR: I'm mixing her a kind of cocktail. You see, the whole hive depends upon her. If

we can put her out of action, then their intelligence breaks down. They revert to just being insects.
MIKE YATES: (echoed) You wouldn't ... you wouldn't harm her?
MRS WIBBSEY: Doctor, I think your hypnotism's wearing off. He's got that funny look about him.
THE DOCTOR: Distract him, would you, Wibbsey? I'm busy collecting up this golden honey stuff.
MRS WIBBSEY: Why on earth are you decanting it into that old slipper?
THE DOCTOR: Like I say, it's live. It's still attuned to my dimensional stabiliser. Ah! Now, isn't that a dainty dish to set before a Queen?
MRS WIBBSEY: Ugh!
THE DOCTOR: Wibbsey.
MIKE YATES: (echoed) She's here. She's back. Inside my mind.
MRS WIBBSEY: Fight it, man. Would you really let yourself be browbeaten, by a woman?
MIKE YATES: (echoed) She's everywhere! She's in here, in the room.

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) And so she was, Mike. Flanked by her fiercest-looking hornet drones, the Queen had ascended into the pupating chamber. She looked absolutely livid.

THE QUEEN: What are you doing here? Do not destroy our swarm. They are all infinitely precious to us.
THE DOCTOR: Destroy them? Of course not.
THE QUEEN: But you have brought fire into the nest. You are intent on killing us all, Doctor.
THE DOCTOR: Only as a very last resort. I hope to persuade you to desist from your plans.
THE QUEEN: Never. The plan will go on. They are already here. The invasion is happening.
THE DOCTOR: Well, I've heard that one before ... Mike, your hip-flask, please.
THE QUEEN: Don't listen to him. We are your Queen.
MIKE YATES: But ... he's the Doctor. I must help him.

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) Good old Captain Yates. You resisted her every inch of the way. Reached inside your Dack sports jacket, withdrew your flask and flung it across the pupating chamber right into my hand.

MIKE YATES: Of course. Whisky's inimical to the brutes.
THE DOCTOR: What? Well actually, I just wanted a quick snifter before I dealt with the Queen. But who needs alcohol when you have a destabilising slipper?
THE QUEEN: Do not interfere with the Royal Jelly. What is that vessel?
THE DOCTOR: This? Oh, just some old footwear.
MRS WIBBSEY: Doctor, can't you see the danger? Stop messing around. Give her what she wants.
THE DOCTOR: She doesn't want this. Nasty old thing, and somewhat ripe.
THE QUEEN: You have stolen some of the Royal Jelly. No! You cannot take it. Give it to us. Give it to me.
THE DOCTOR: What, this?

THE DOCTOR: (narrating) Her hornet drones were surrounding us by now. We were flanked on all sides, and everything looked pretty hopeless. But I saw a certain look in the Queen's glittering faceted eyes. Greed, and desire. The sweetness and the sting of the Royal Jelly made her drool with anticipated pleasure. Even though her pantry was packed to the rafters, she wanted every last drop for herself.

THE DOCTOR: This, your Majesty? Oh, go on, then. Have it your own way.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) Then the Doctor held out the slipper, just like Prince Charming holding the shoe for the foulest of the Ugly Sisters, and slowly the Queen hauled her distended body towards him, clacking her pincers and buzzing her wings, overcome by feverish greed. Funny for one so caught up in the life of the mind to be so prey to bodily need. She snatched the slipper from his hands and drank deeply, imbibing the jelly and making the most horrendous noises.

MIKE YATES: I can feel her influence ebbing.
MRS WIBBSEY: Her mind must be on other things.

(Sonic screwdriver operating.)
MIKE YATES: (narrating) But the Doctor shook his head, and showed us the sonic screwdriver, which he had set to trigger the latent vibrations in the slipper itself, and its connection with the dimensional stabilisers. He was playing the Queen at her own game, tapping into her weird powers. He had activated the slipper, and set it to do exactly what it had once done to him.

MRS WIBBSEY: She's shrinking. But how can she, we're all minuscule as it is.
THE DOCTOR: Galaxies within galaxies. Remember, Mrs Wibbsey?

MIKE YATES: (narrating) The hornet guards were quivering with incomprehension, because as the Queen rapidly shrank and thrashed about, she was losing her grip on their minds, on everyone's mind. So horrified was she at what was happening to her, her perfect control was lost.

MRS WIBBSEY: I don't believe it.
MIKE YATES: You've done it, Doctor.
THE DOCTOR: Quick, hide the slipper. We don't want it falling into the wrong feelers.
THE QUEEN: This destruction is pitiless.
THE DOCTOR: This isn't destruction. It's just desserts.
THE QUEEN: Help me, please! Come to me, aides.
MIKE YATES: She's tiny. Quick, tread on her.
THE DOCTOR: No Mike, there's no need for that. She'll get a good deal tinier. I'm exiling her alone to another universe, the micro universe. Away from her own kind, she'll be just another insect. Beyond the swarm, beyond everything, where she can do no more harm.
THE QUEEN: Please, save me.
(Noise of miniaturisation stops.)
MRS WIBBSEY: That's incredible.
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, you sounded actually impressed then, for a second.
MRS WIBBSEY: But the rest of the hornets, how will we escape them?
THE DOCTOR: There's no-one in control now, the swarm's in anarchy.
MIKE YATES: And the hive still burns.
MRS WIBBSEY: Perhaps we'd better run for it.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) And so we ran, hampered at every turn by smoke and maddened hornets. We picked up what weapons we could to batter them back, and make our way into the outer layers of the papery brain.

MIKE YATES: We're not going to make it.
THE DOCTOR: Oh yes we are. Do you really doubt it, Mike?

MIKE YATES: (narrating) The hornets were a lost cause without their Queen. They reverted to pure insect instinct. They used their brute strength to batter to bits the strange origami architecture of their city. They swarmed towards the open air. All we had to do was to dodge the flames and get out before they did. We emerged from one of the animal's eyes...
(Sonic screwdriver operated.)
MIKE YATES: (narrating) ... and the Doctor activated the slipper one last time, in order to return us to our natural size.

(Miniaturisation ray reversed. MRS WIBBSEY gasps.)
MRS WIBBSEY: We're back.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) The miraculous ballet shoe was a dreadful soggy mess by now, and the Doctor tossed it onto the lifeless, smouldering wreck of the zebra.

MRS WIBBSEY: Well, I'd better open all the windows, let some of the smoke out.
THE DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, don't touch those sash cords.

MRS WIBBSEY: Whyever not?
THE DOCTOR: It may have escaped your attention, but every single alien hornet is currently contained within the zebra.
MIKE YATES: Not for long. They're all about to follow us out.
THE DOCTOR: Another adjustment to the dimensional stabiliser.

MIKE YATES: (narrating) Suddenly the air round the zebra shimmered, and turned slightly opaque.
(Force field operation noise.)
MIKE YATES: (narrating) As the Doctor's gadget surrounded the creature in a miniature version of his invisible bell jar.

MRS WIBBSEY: Are they sealed in there for good?
THE DOCTOR: Yes. Or at least until I take them somewhere to release them.
MIKE YATES: Could you make it a very, very distant galaxy, please, Doctor?
THE DOCTOR: (laugh) Mike, Mrs Wibbsey - dear Mrs Wibbsey - you were both brilliant. Not only did we confront the Queen and cut her down to size, we lured every single hornet back to the hive to be sealed in there for ... well, if not for life then at least for Christmas.
MIKE YATES: Hey, I'd completely forgotten. It's Christmas Eve.
MRS WIBBSEY: Well, I'd better get down to the village for some more parsnips.
THE DOCTOR: You'll need your wellies, Mrs Wibbsey. It's snowing.
MIKE YATES: I said those clouds looked threatening.
THE DOCTOR: Less threatening than a swarm of hornets though, eh Mike? Ha-ha.
(Salvation Army band starts playing Good King Wenceslas outside.)
MIKE YATES: But can the Queen do any further harm, Doctor?
THE DOCTOR: I hope not. I sincerely hope not.
(*And here ends the radio broadcast.*)

(Clock ticking in the background.)
MIKE YATES: Well, that was the best Christmas dinner I've had in years. I really ought to help Mrs Wibbsey with the dishes. Do you remember those old UNIT Christmas parties, Doctor?
THE DOCTOR: How could I forget?
MIKE YATES: They were happy times. Perhaps you'll come to the New Year's Reunion with me.
THE DOCTOR: I'm sorry, Mike, I have places to go. Once I've collected the TARDIS and made sure Mrs Wibbsey is accepted into village life, she can live here now, in the cottage.
MIKE YATES: So you'll be moving on again?
THE DOCTOR: Would you mind taking your namesake, Captain? I wouldn't ask, it's just that I've already got a dog. There may be ructions.
MIKE YATES: Of course. What about the rest of it? All your relics, the stuffed animals, the goblin man and so on.
THE DOCTOR: Percy Noggins is taking everything for his private collection. It's all quite harmless now.
MIKE YATES: Well, Doctor, I really must say it's been a pleasure. I thought I was too old for all these shenanigans of yours. I'm sorry I went a bit wobbly back there. I don't know how she got to me.
THE DOCTOR: Don't forget the Queen had a good poke around in my subconscious too. Nasty business. But all's well that ends with a nice glass of something by the fire, eh?
MIKE YATES: Indeed. Look, the snow's falling pretty thickly now. It'll be deep, I should think. Perhaps you won't be able to get away as soon after all.
THE DOCTOR: Oh, I'm sure I will. I have to, you see. There's so much more for me to do. Ah, Mrs Wibbsey.
MRS WIBBSEY: I put some stuffed dates on a plate, and a couple of mince pies.
THE DOCTOR: Oh, presentation is everything, Mrs Wibbsey. Will you join us for some elderberry punch? It's non-alcoholic.
MRS WIBBSEY: I should think so too. I've left the claggiest dishes to soak. Blinking bread sauce.
MIKE YATES: Those parsnips were excellent, Mrs Wibbsey.
MRS WIBBSEY: Well, they are my speciality. Oh, well, just a small one then.
THE DOCTOR: That's the spirit. Now then, a toast.

(Church organ playing Good King Wenceslas in the background.)
THE DOCTOR: To past and future times.
MIKE YATES + MRS WIBBSEY: To past and future times.
THE DOCTOR: And, of course, Merry Christmas. (laughs.)

(Tom Baker's closing Doctor Who theme, composed by Ron Grainer.)
ANNOUNCER: (Tom Baker) Hornets' Nest - Hive of Horror, by Paul Magrs, starred Tom Baker and Richard Franklin. Mrs Wibbsey was played by Susan Jameson, and The Queen was played by Rula Lenska. The Script Editor was Michael Stevens. It was Produced and Directed by Kate Thomas, and is published by BBC Audio Books.

Transcribed by David Tait